THE POKEY PRESS

CONFESSIONS OF A SYSOP

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- **FROM THOUGHT TO PAGE**
  DESKTOP PUBLISHING DEMYSTIFIED, PART TWO
- **A COMPUTER PRIMER**
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- **8-BIT AND ST PRODUCT REVIEWS**
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The ATARI COMPUTER CLUB of the PALM BEACHES meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Science Museum and Planetarium at Dreher Park, West Palm Beach, Florida. See back page for a map.

Please use the following addresses to correspond with the club. All correspondence should be addressed to The ATARI COMPUTER CLUB of the Palm Beaches and sent to the proper address, depending on the nature of the correspondence.

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FROM THE CENTER SEAT
By Jim Woodward

SUNATARI '87 LIVES

As you can tell from the front cover of the newsletter, things have progressed quite a ways since last month's issue. Please check out the article on the only ATARI Expo that will be held in the Southeastern United States this year. It promises to be a lot of fun. And start making plans to attend.

BBS GETTING BETTER

The club BBS has been very busy lately. Lots of calls, lots of messages, lots of fun. I would like to thank Brett Cramer of The Computer Room for once again fixing a tired disk drive.

Secondly, the board is a great place to get the latest news and information on SUNATARI '87. All the latest news is being posted in the Bulletin File. You will be able to tell how fresh the information is by checking the "updated" date on the top of the file. In the Bulletins, you will be kept up-to-date on related news and events, as well as a list of who will be attending the show. Don't forget to check out the Bulletin file each time you call the board.

Finally, the board has taken a leap into the 21st century. Thanks to the generous donations that we have received, the club has added a PR:Connection and a Smarteam 1200 baud modem to the board. This will make uploads, downloads, etc. much faster. Watch the board for more details.

ALL IS WELL IN THE WORLD.....

Several months ago we put out a call for volunteers to

AUCTION UPDATE

by Al Tressel

At a recent Officers Meeting, it was decided to have another of our highly successful AUCTIONS. I was again selected to be the auctioneer. Hopefully we will be able to raise some money for the club and have some fun at the same time.

At the August meeting, the auction forms were available to be filled out in advance. Bring the forms with the lots. The cost for selling your lots will be 10% of the selling price with a minimum bid of 50 cents. The 50 cents will be collected in advance with any balance due the club deducted from the proceeds of the sale. Please do not put multiple items in one lot unless you are selling them as one lot for one price. If you have several differently priced items, make up seperate auction sheets for them. Also, the auction will be run with minimum reserve bids, so sellers are not allowed to bid on their own lots. Your lot will not be sold for less than your minimum hold bid.

The club will not be held responsible for any software or hardware that does not work. The club will, however, make every effort to make buyers and sellers happy. If there is a problem, the buyer and seller will be put in contact with each other and they can make the proper arrangements. Remember, all sales are final, and the club will not be held responsible.

So, get your unneeded computer related items together for our auction and make it a real success. If you have any further questions regarding the auction, you can contact me at 964-2476.

CONFESSIONS OF A SYSOP

DOES THIS KIND OF LIFE SOUND INTERESTING TO YOU?

by Jim Woodward

So, you want to be a sysop? Want to have your own Bulletin Board? You think that running a board will be the best thing that has happened to you since Vanna White took over the letter-turning job from Susan Stafford? Wrong! It is work, from day one. I know, I'm a sysop. (Sorry, I wasn't doing Jack Webb.)

Still want to go through with it? O.K., sit down at your desk, grab a piece of paper and a pen, and make a list. Number one, what computer are you going to use? Just happen to have an extra one laying around? This is important, because which computer you have makes a big difference. It doesn't matter if you are going to run an 8-bit or 16-bit board, it's best to have lots of memory.

Then supplement that by adding a ramdisk. Ramdisks are great for keeping files, such as menu and help screens, in. This cuts down on drive wear and tear. And everyone locally knows about that!

Next item, do you have a seperate phone line not being used? No? Too bad, because now you have two choices. First off, you run your board at night when you and everyone else in the house is asleep. Not too bad, but if Grandma calls from Topeka to tell you that Grandpa had the big one, all she is going to get is a carrier tone. She thinks the phone is broken, and you get the news in the morning after you turn the board off.

The other choice is to get another phone line installed. This is the fun part. Here is what was on my bill for the phone line to be moved from my old place to the new one:

Monthly Charges:
Central Office Line........................$10.70/month
Touch-Tone Service.......................$ 1.00/month
Wire Maintenance Plan....................$ .55/month
Trouble Isolation Plan....................$ 1.00/month
One Time Charges:
Entrance Bridge.......................... $ 3.00
Telephone Office Line Connection..........$19.50
New Line Connection......................$31.50
Order Processing.........................$25.00
Home Visit...............................$16.00
I&M Labor Basic..........................$ 8.75

Like that? I have the maintenance fees on there just in case there is a problem. I'd rather have a guy I can complain to a big company about, rather than Joe's Phone Service if the line needs work and the job isn't done right. Still want to be a sysop?

Mass storage. Sounds nice, huh? You will need some mass storage devices. Disk drives, now matter how many, what density or how many sides, are important. And despite what anyone tells you, you don't need 80 megabytes of storage to run a nice board. I've seen boards run on 65XE's and one doubled 1050 that are nicer than boards with gigabytes of storage space. And they get called more often.

If you have a ram disk on your computer, that is the first of your mass storage devices. You will need at least one disk drive. Your 8-bit ATARI will handle 4 drives, more with extra devices. It is just up to you and your needs. And your budget. Remember, you have to eat every now and then.

Now, which modem are you going to use? Not just brand, but how fast is it going to be? The choices are 300 baud, 1200bps, and 2400bps. Not the change there? There is a big difference between baud and bps. I won't get into the technical stuff here, but there is a difference. Some snotty modemers get upset when you say you have a 1200 baud modem. If they give you a hassle, just ask them, "What's your point?"

When you do choose a modem, make sure it is auto answer, unless you want to sit at the board 24 hours a day and hit the return key each time some one calls. Also make sure it will hang up on it's own after a call. The MPP1000C for 8-bits would do it. The newer 1000E is a problem child. Check on little things like this.

Will your modem be Hayes compatible? It may make a difference to your program and to your callers. What is Hayes Compatible? The folks at Hayes make some pretty darn good modems. They last forever. They also cost about as much as some small Third World countries bring in a year. They also created some of the standards on how modems should operate and communicate with each other. Other companies started making thier own modems that do what a Hayes does, but without having to eat rice and beans for a year to afford one. It is best to pay the extra money and get one that is Hayes compatible if you don't get a Hayes.Now for the real fun.

Which program are you going to use? (That was quite a moan!) You have quite a choice of programs to choose from for either 8-bit or 16-bit. For the 8-bits you have Bulletin Board Construction Set, Oasis, Nite Lite Systems, Express BBS, FoReM, Amis, and the one I am fond of, Carina. I'm sure that there are others that I didn't mention, but you see what you are up against.

For the 16-bits there is Michtron BBS, Forem ST, and others. How do you tell which one is right for your needs? Talk to sysops in your area. Ask them which program they are using and ask them how they like it.

It is also helpful if you can get a tour of sysop commands. This is where you will find out if the program is easy to set-up and maintain. This is of great importance. The program can have great user features but if it is a 3 week job to get it set-up the first time and 30 minutes each time you have to reboot it, well, you get the point. Ask anyone who had the early versions of Bulletin Board Construction Set. Also remember, when choosing the program to make sure it is expandable. If you add another disk drive, will that cause problems? Make sure of these things before you pay your hard earned money, that you don't get stuck holding the proverbial bag.

Finally, there is what kind of personality your board is going to have. Will there be a theme running throughout your board? Like a "D&D" theme, or Star Trek, musical, or humorous, or whatever. This is a great way to keep things lively. Everyone has a name along the lines of the theme and when leaving messages to each other, talks along those same lines. Using the "D&D" theme, the SysOp could use the name of his favorite character and the message bases could have names like "The Dungeon", or

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STAR FLEET I TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS

by Jim Woodward

The following speech was taken from the address given by Admiral Emeritus Jim Woodward during a recent visit to the Academy. We thank the Admiral for taking time from his busy schedule to address the graduating class of 2386.

Comandant R. L. Winkler: Good morning Cadets. Today, we have a very special guest. Admiral Woodward of the U.G.A.S. Galactica will give a brief speech. As you all know, the Admiral is one of the most decorated Officers in the Fleet. The exploits of his ship and crew are well known. It is an honor to have him here to address you. Admiral......

(Applause)

Admiral Woodward: Thank you, Comandant, for those kind words. It is always a pleasure to be back here at the Academy, and to speak to the cadets. As you all may know, the Galactica is here at United Galactic Alliance headquarters for a major overhaul of the shield and weapons systems. I also had a chance to spend some time at Med Center. My right knee needed some Regen from an old injury.

Cadets, you are about to graduate from the Academy during the most critical period of time that the Alliance has ever faced. I wish that you could have graduated during peace time like I did. But, alas, this is not the case. You, and those who are commanding ships now, are vital to the very existance of the Alliance. Since the attack on peaceful planets by the Krellans and Zaldrons, we have been on the defensive, trying to hold them off until the newer and more powerful Dreadnaught class battleships are finished. Until that time, it is our duty to keep the Krellans and Zaldrons away from the inner quadrants, and protect the already vunerable outer quadrants.

Before I go any further, let me stress one thing. NEVER underestimate the enemy. They may be smaller, and they may have smaller ships, but they are very dangerous. A Cloaked Zaldron can cause more trouble than three Krellans. My crew and I have been assigned to look for survivors from Fleet ships that have been damaged or destroyed. And in many cases, the Captain of the ship got careless and took unneccessary chances. And because of this, crews were lost, planets were destroyed and quadrants are now in enemy hands.

This is not a Tri-D Holo-Sim you play in the arcades. This is not a program you load into your ATARI Mega-Terabyte P.C. This is the real world. Your every move will mean the survival of you and your crew, or finding out what happens when your body is exposed to the vacuum of space. If you want to avoid the latter, follow these simple rules. And if you do, who knows, you may wind up with all this fancy braid and all the medals on your uniform.

First off, never lose track of your energy levels. Many a ship has been lost because the Captain took a chance on getting one more Krellan, or clearing out one more sector. Beware, other ships have been lost when trying to get back to a Starbase without enough energy to protect themselves if there is an enemy vessel or two in the same quadrant as the Starbase. I've seen it happen. The ship is staggering in to the Starbase, with just enough power to run the Enviro-Gens on the Life Support decks, and get to the docking port. But not enough for a direct hit from the Krellan that was firing on the Starbase. The Krellan turns his attention to the weakened and damaged ship, and.......the Starbase sends out a shuttle to pick up whatever is left. Remember, always leave power to get safely to the Starbase and to defend yourself if need be.

Secondly, NEVER take on the enemy if you don't know where a Starbase is. Any ship captain who does this is asking to have his life extinguished. But his crew doesn't deserve to die because of his incompetence. Always know where the nearest Starbase is, what its status is, what its reserve level is, and if it is about to come under attack.

Next, stockpile torpedos. When you go to a Starbase for the three "R's", Repair, Resupply, and Replacements, you are automatically resupplied to twenty torpedos. Your ship, however, can hold thirty. The trick is this: when you arrive in the quadrant with the Starbase, release any torpedos you may have as mines. As soon as you are ready leave the Starbase, retrieve those mines. Remember, the maximum you can have is thirty.

There is one, and I'll use the term trick for lack of a better word, that the enemy has problems with. They just can't seem to grasp this concept, so use it to your advantage. When warping into a quadrant, put yourself into a corner. Now, I know that that sounds strange, but it is quite smart. By doing so, you have one or two shields that won't be taking hits. Switch this energy to the shields that will need it. Or use the power for the weapons systems. You will find that this is a system that works quite well. Learn how to effectively use your shield controls.

Remember how I told you to keep track of the Starbases? Always keep track of how may enemy ships are in the same quadrant. If it appears that the base is about to come under attack, go to another Starbase, if possible, and get restocked. That way, when the alert goes out, all you have to do is warp to the quadrant with the besieged base and defend it. You are at full strength and have a better chance of saving the base. And there is nothing worse than allowing a Starbase in your region be destroyed. Here is another way to defeat the enemy and receive commendations from the fleet. Use your phasers when you get there. Put them on manual, and when the targeting computer asks you for the amount of energy to expend on the target, respond with an amount three points below the amount of energy it would take to destroy the enemy. After they are disabled by your phasers, dock with the Starbase, then, use your tractor beam to pull the disabled ship into the base. This is always a good way to complete your mission in the alloted time. Five ships at one time really gives you extra time to work with on the Elapsed Mission Time clock.

And that, I'm afraid, is all I have time for. I have a meeting with Star Fleet Command soon and I don't want to be late. I hope that I have learned something and that I'll see each and every one of you at the Alliance Victory Party, once we defeat the Krellans and Zaldrons. Good Luck, and God Speed.••
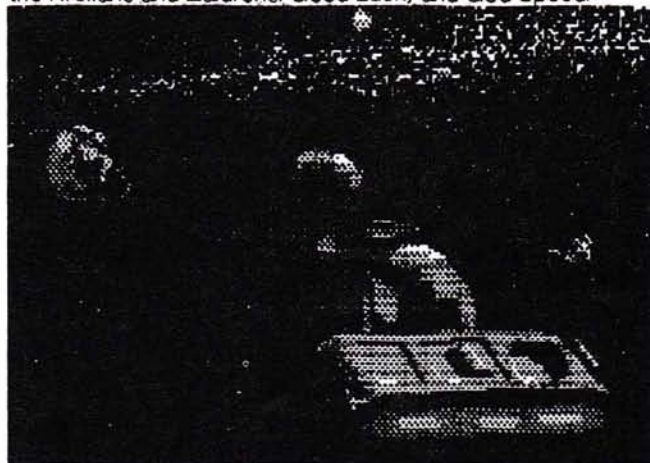
ADMIRAL WOODWARD'S SHUTTLE RETURNS TO THE GALACTICA

FINALLY....

by Jim Woodward

The SUNATARI '87 show is on! November 21st & 22nd are the dates and the Royce Hotel is the place. SUNATARI '87 is the only "ATARI Expo" being held in the Southeastern U.S. this year. We want it to be the best one yet!

The show committee (Jim Woodward, Al Tressel, Ken White, Victor Abreu, Don Mercer, etc.) has been working very hard to put the pieces together, and the hard work is paying off. As you can see, the last month has been very busy. Here is a rundown on what has happened, and what will be happening.

The first thing was to find a suitable site. After lots of phone calls, visits and negotiating, the Royce Hotel was chosen. It is right next to the airport and made what turned out to be the best offer.

Then, we started working on the various forms that had to be done for the vendors that will be contacted to attend the show. Contracts had to be made up, as well as booth reservation sheets, letters to other User Groups, the floor plan had to be drawn up, envelopes stuffed and addressed. As you can tell, lots of hard work.

As you can tell, we have an official show logo. Local artist Mark Cantrell, a long time club member, provided us with the logo, based on an idea by Ken White. Randy Wrenn converted it into a Degas Elite file so we can use it in the newsletter and on forms. The logo presents the "Florida in the Winter" look. The logo will also be used on t-shirts and hats that you will be able to purchase before and at the show. This logo is also being distributed via Bulletin Boards across the country. It is just that good.

User groups through out the Southeast have been contacted so that their members will have plenty of notice to attend the show and be able to purchase discount tickets. The committee hopes that these groups will be able to attend and enjoy the show. Advertisements, similar to the one in this issue, have also been sent to these groups to let the readers of those newsletters know about the show.

ATARI Corporation will be there. There will be five representatives of the company there to demo the latest in software and hardware. We don't know what will be shown, but then, if we told you, it would spoil the suprise. Other companies that we are hoping to have attend the show are ICD, Hybrid Arts, Avante Garde, and many other ATARI supporters. By the time you read this, the vendors will have been contacted and reservations will be being made. To see what companies will be attending, as well as the latest news and information concerning the show, call the Club BBS and check the Bulletins file. We will keep you up-to-date on happenings as we go along. So far, the only other companies who have signed contracts are Carina Software Services (Jupiter, FL) and The Computer Room (Ft. Lauderdale, FL). Check the BBS and attend the meetings

and get involved. This is going to be the biggest ATARI happening this year!

Special thanks go to those who have contributed so far: Al Tressel, Ken White, Don Mercer, Victor Abreu, Mark Cantrell, Randy Wrenn, Brett Cramer, Jerry Horanoff and Sandi Austin at Atari and Robert Summerville, Director of Sales at the Royce Hotel. We would also like those companies who have helped so far: NEC for the P6 Pinwriter, Softlogic for Publishing Partner, Generic Software for First Cadd, Atari Corporation for their cooperation, Bob's Quick Print in Delray Beach for doing a superb job in making the copies of all the forms in the vendor and user group packages in a very short time. Special thanks to Ken White who created the forms.

DON'T JUST COMPLAIN! TRY WRITING!

by Walter Williams

How many of you have gone to a software store and seen a title that you wanted but was for some other computer? Some of you might say to yourself, "Darn, I should have gotten that brand of computer." Most of you probably say, (half-heartedly), "Oh well, maybe it will come out for my Atari." I say, " If you see something that you want, WRITE THE SOFTWARE COMPANY!!!"

Most companies will be more than happy to read your letters. Out of six companies that I have written, five responded. I wrote Springboard concerning "Newsroom" for the 8-bit. The reply was a form letter saying that it wasn't available for my system and that they didn't plan to make a version. A letter to SubLogic asking for Jet only brought copies of their product info forms. As a reply from Data East, I was sent a form letter with a REAL signature on it regretfully telling me that they had no plans of releasing any titles for the Atari 8-bit. From MicroProse, I received a letter telling me that, since most Atari users were using machines with less than 64K, they weren't going to make an Atari 8-bit version of "Gunship". (More on that at a later date).

The people at Suncom were very willing to please me. I had informed them that the "Icontroller", a miniture joystick, wouldn't work on the XE or ST because of the limited reach of the plug into the socket. I asked them to make a version specifically for the ST/XE. They said that they would look into the design shortcomings and keep me informed. That sounds good to me.

So if you want good software, write to the publishers and politely ask for some. Most will consider it at least. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Since the time that Walter received the reply to his request, Springboard has apparently relented and WILL be issuing a version of "Newsroom" for the 8-bits. The reason? A large number of letters from Atari owners requesting thee program....so it DOES work...) (OTHER EDITOR'S NOTE: Just before press time, Walter received a letter from the President of Suncom.) We received your recent letter commenting on the fit problem of the IconTroller with Atari computers. The fit problem on the Atari joystick port was a tooling error. As soon as the product is back in production I will send you a corrected version. This process may take up to 90 days. (FINAL EDITOR'S NOTE: It has often been stated in this newsletter and in the major Atari magazines that companies do want to hear from you, and that they do listen to your comments. It only takes the time to write a letter, address the envelope and put a stamp on it. So take the time every now and then, it does work!)••
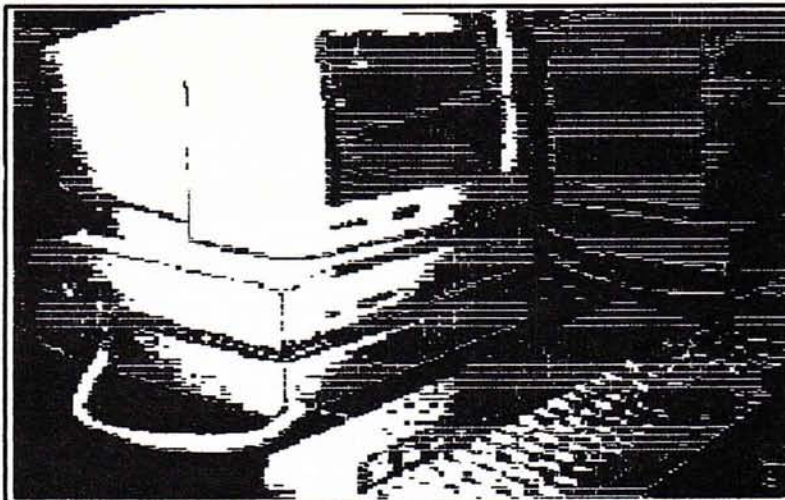
ST NOTES

FROM THOUGHT TO PAGE:
DESKTOP PUBLISHING DEMYSTIFIED PT. II

by Ken White

(Editor's Note: In the last issue of the Pokey Press, we took a look at the basics of desktop publishing....what it is, what you can do with it, and whether you need to do ANYTHING with it. This month, we continue in a similar vein, examining the very important subject of page layout and design, in this case with the relatively simple layout of an advertisement...)

So you've decided that you really do need desktop publishing in your life, eh? (If you don't, this is all pretty pointless, wouldn't you think? Maybe you should go watch TV for a while...). Great! Glad to hear it. So what do you want to publish?

That's okay. Don't bother answering. Talking back to a piece of paper would probably be very embarrassing and demeaning to you anyway.

By way of explanation, let me add that I'm asking because the WHAT is very, very important when you sit down in front of your computer and boot up your favorite desktop publishing program.

Let's say, for example, that you're laying out an advertisement that'll be run in your local newspaper. Obviously, the first thing you're going to want to do is decide what you're selling (that may sound somewhat simplistic and condescending, but I've sold and designed ads in the past and it's frightening how many people DON'T have any idea of what they plan to sell. They want an ad, but when you ask them what kind of ad they would like, it's "Gee, I dunno. What do YOU think I should do?").

The WHAT that you're trying to sell should be the focal point of the ad that you're designing. You're going to want to make the reader's eyes fall on your ad long enough for the information to sink in. So the ad has to be attractive, it's got to be clear (otherwise the reader won't know what the hell you're trying to sell), and most importantly, it's got to stand out. There should be nothing subtle in advertising, print or otherwise if ya want art, go to a Kurasawa film (no, I'm not going to start that stuff again...).

But how to make the ad stand out? You could, of course, staple a five dollar bill to each copy of the publication. That would certainly make your ad "stand out". Hardly practical, though. Let's face it you're gonna have to do something WITH the ad, using the tools at your disposal, to make it effective. What the ad says, of course,

is important. But HOW it says it is equally important. Perhaps even MORE important.

In a print advertisement, your tools are text and graphics. What does a desktop publishing program do? It combines text and graphics into a (hopefully) pleasing display, both on your screen and on the printed page. Ha! You thought this was going to be some dumb dissertation on advertising theory or something. So you sit down with your desktop publishing program booted up and you get to work. Whadda ya do? First of all, turn it off. That's correct. Off. Hey, would I tell you to do something bad? Of course not. SO TURN IT OFF! NOW!

Fine. Now that we're all calm again, let's think a bit. Let's gather our hordes around us, much like Genghis Khan did in the good old days, and plan our strategy. As Uncle Jack Tramiel says, "Business is war", and your advertisement is the first salvo. (Okay, so the military metaphor is starting to wear a little thin allow me to get out of it gracefully, if you please...).

Presumably you already know what your ad will be selling (if not, back up a half a dozen paragraphs...), so begin by planning the ad AROUND that product. If you've got a graphic (picture, drawing, photograph) of the product, it should be prominently featured. Your desktop publishing program should give you the ability to import (bring in) graphics from an art program of some sort. Many desktop publishing programs have rudimentary art capabilities (if you can call it art...) ; for example, Publishing Partner allows you to draw lines, squares, circles, various other geometric shapes, and even allows some "freehand" drawing. This is okay for a quick box with some copy in it, or a circle around a picture. But you're hardly gonna duplicate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with a few shapes and some quick freehand drawing with a mouse, if ya know what I mean...

So, you need to be able to import graphics. With Publishing Partner, this includes Neochrome pictures, Degas and Degas Elite pictures, and pictures in Tiny format. The greater the number of formats available to

SEE PUBLISHING, PAGE 20

Next month, our series on desktop publishing will conclude with an examination of the process of putting a text-intensive document, such as a newsletter, together with desktop publishing software

GEnie ONLINE:
THE FUTURE OF USER INTERFACES

This month's "Online" feature is a little different - it's an excerpt from a discussion in the IBM PC Roundtable on GEnie about user interfaces - the mouse, the touchscreen...... ....and possibly the interfaces of the future.....Check it out...these people may not be Atarians, but they've got some interesting ideas.

TOMNEFF   at 11:05 EST
Now, I have used a mouse from time to time, and even though I'm sympathetic to the need for some kind of non-keyboard device in certain situations, I think the current mouse concept is rather a hothouse creature who won't survive the cold outside world without some radical adaptations.

For one thing, we have invented ourselves another physical, analog device with moving mechanical parts here, and the primary fact about such things is that they wear out, drift out of whack, and just plain break. The mouse I used, for instance, was terribly vulnerable to desk dirt. Pretty tough when your software's fanatical devotion to the Mouse Principle renders it inoperative without rodent help!

As I am writing this on a home "laptop" portable, the Gridcase 3 (like most current "laptops," this one would be more accurately described as a "lap killer"), another problem with mice is immediate: what do you do when flat, clear, clean space for the little animal can't be found? (It sure couldn't on this table right now, laden as it is with magazines and breakfast!) What do you do in an aisle seat on the Redeye from NY to DC?

Thoughts like these lead me to conclude that the mouse (or trackball, or foot-mouse, or whatever) is intrinsically a "power accessory" for the office environment - a time saver for the trained professional, but of markedly less use to other people and in other settings. Current attempts to universalize its use, create a world of software rigidly requiring it, and so forth, are misguided, to put it kindly.

I don't like the touchscreen either having used it too, because it it too clumsy to use, insufficently universal (what do I do on my LCD or plasma portable?), and it gets the screen VERY dirty.

But there is a ray of hope on the horizon, in the form of that keyboard-mounted touch-pad on the Amiga! Now THERE is a design that makes sense. All you need is a few square inches on the keyboard mold; no separate device with NO moving parts, hence no breakage or cleaning problems. Since it's near the keyboard, you can switch from typing to pointing without gymnastics. Clearly, this could be adapted for a portable too. In short, I like it. However, I haven't used it, and since this is a PC Roundtable not a Commodore one, I'll just say that I hope to see something like this available as a PC peripheral soon. TMN

CRANE   at 18:07 EST
My first exposure to the touchpad showed some potential, but it seemed inconvenient for large movements through text, etc. Also not clear how you accomplish the equivalent of 'click-drag' (hold down the shift or ctrl??). I find the multi-buttom mouse useful in some situations...for instance the Mouse Systems Mouse w/ custom popup menus allows the left key to handle frequent functions in a comm program, while the right button supports Sidekick which frequently pops up in the middle of the comm program. -- DJ Crane (DJ is the first name...good to meet you all)

HOMCHICK   at 13:02 EST
I don't think this topic is really about mice. The basic question is more about pointing, and its applicability to computers. The trackball, touchpad, touchscreen and mouse are all devices that allow us to simplify the complexity of describing something. By the same token, they may limit the ultimate complexity of what we are able to describe. If it isn't in the list of icons we are presented with, we can't select it. The UNIX concept of tools and filters linked together with some user creativity is a much better expert interface.

An analogy that comes to mind is someone in a high-priced french restaurant ordering from a menu, of which he has minimal understanding, by pointing at the offerings.

Clearly, this is going to enable him to eat the first time he comes into the restaurant, but a year from now (assumming he likes french food, and can afford numerous visits), is he going to point, or order in a normal manner? And, how is he going to feel about a french restaurant where the waiters don't understand french and REQUIRE the patron to point to order?

Some computer functions clearly benefit from pointing devices -- MacPaint and AutoCAD are two such examples -- and we increase productivity with a mouse-like interface here. However, the Xerox STAR / MacIntosh interface with its icons and pointers, is not a good application of the idea because it is inherently limiting. It allows a novice to use the computer almost immediately, but can keep him a novice forever by the limits of its design.

The MacIntosh interface may have solved the problem of interfacing with the novice, but to my mind, has not presented the expert with a comfortable and powerful environment in which he can be productive.

This should be the next area of investigation, but I am not sure that Apple, with its home computer background, is interested in grappling with it.

TOMNEFF   at 20:12 EST
Even though the icon-driven interface and the command-line interface do not excel at the same things, the totality of a user's work typically includes both kinds of things. Nothing, in principle, precludes an icon system from allowing the user to "pull down" a command line just as he can "pull down" a menu right now. The problem so far is that command line enthusiasts, having noted that there are SOME things a icon system does less well, respond by preferring the command line EVERYWHERE, even in places where an icon system would be superior. An analogous chauvinism prevailed at PARC. It is a little analogous to the diehards who advocate ASM for everything up to and including massive 100,000-line application systems squaring off against Pascal aesthetes who would rather botch a simple menu routine than desecrate the virgin sanctity of a WHILE loop. The truth lies somewhere in between, if anyone can survive in the crossfire long enough to develop the hybrid system and prove it. TMN

HOMCHICK   at 21:11 EST
I am intrigued by Tom's description of icons as "... [providing] a succinct pictorial hierarchy for describing an application network." That, coupled with the comments about icons guiding a user from his base screen to his chosen application, has put the icon interface in a new light. It seems that it is no more than a series of picture menus you can point at! In other words, the crux of the Macintosh interface could be implemented on an HP150 with text menus. And since text menus are less given to misinterpretation than icons, it would probably work better, too.

Now, to get back to our restaurant, I can't let Tom get away with describing ordering in French as fancy pointing. The only way this makes sense is to say that language is a series of symbols for ideas, and we "point" to the ideas by using the symbols. My concept was that ordering in French show a fluency in the language of a French Restaurant, just as manipulating the computer using the text-language elements of the operating system's vocabulary show a fluency in operating the computer. Since all computers I know about have a set number of operations and commands,

ST PRODUCT REVIEWS

STAR TREK: THE GAME
IS THIS LONG-AWAITED GAME THE "SOFTWARE OF THE 90'S"?

(Editor's note: We're running one of our rare reprints this issue (especially rare since it's a game review, instead of some kind of technical article that we're too stupid to write ourselves...) for one very important reason - the game described here, though unreleased in this country, has been widely seen by just about EVERYBODY who has an ST. How so, you ask...

Bootlegging, old pal...this program has been so widely bootlegged that many people, including editors or various Atari newsletters across the country, are convinved that it's already been released here. I've even seen reviews (and reprints of reviews) of the BOOTLEGGED version in various club newsletters.

Of course, this has undoubtedly been a bit disconserting to to programmers at Beyond Software, reading reviews of their program (however favorable) BEFORE it's even been released in the U.S. And, according to one columnist in The Atari Journal (out of Miami, FL), the heavy bootlegging has given Simon and Shuster, who will be marketing the game in this country, the idea that it may be pointless to even bring it out here. Hey, if everybody's already got it....

I, personally, have seen a copy of this game, and I have my own opinions about it. And when it's OFFICIALLY released in the U.S.A., I may even review it. The game HAS been officially released in Europe, and Brett Cramer, at The Computer Room in Ft. Lauderdale, has already ordered some copies of the European release to sell to those eagerly awaiting the release version.

But until we at the Pokey Press are able to get our hands on a legal, release copy of STAR TREK, we'll have to make do with the following review, taken from FASTer, a Canadian disk-based newsletter. We thank the staff at FASTer for permission to reprint the following, which they took from a French newsletter...)

by Stephane Lavoisard
(ST Magazine - Issue #10)
Edited and translated by Andre Lafreniere
and Alain Plouffe from FaSTer.

Star Trek was certainly, with Dungeon Master, the most awaited game since with every new computer show, we could observe a new pre-release version. We've finally received it, surrounded by rumours claiming that this was the software of the 1990s. It's thus with excusable eagerness that I threw myself on this program and I might as well tell you that after I started playing, I found it difficult to stop long enough to write this article.

First, the authors have had the excellent idea not to base their scenario on either the films or the series. Hence, it's an original scenario to which they treated us. Since a while back, numerous spaceships are mysteriously disappearing in a certain part of the universe. The Federation has mandated you to go with the Enterprise to resolve this affair. The loading of the program is such that one gets impatient to see the game. Effectively, after only a few seconds, the digitized voice of Captain Kirk sounds: "Space, the final frontier", accompanied with the familiar sound effects, which are followed by the theme (not digitized this time, because this little folly grabs a lot of memory). Might as well tell you that
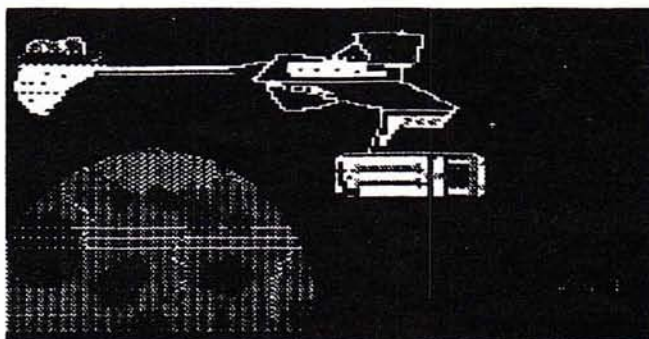
you'll be thoroughly seduced by this grand presentation, accompanied by a superb rendition of the ship. At last, the main game screen appears.

This one is composed of one large display surrounded on two sides with seven smaller screens. The main screen is the flight deck of the Enterprise, digitized for sure, and all the actors of the series are present. If you click on single individuals, their picture appears in the main screen along with the actions he or she is able to accomplish. If the main screen is in one of the mini-screens, all you need to do to bring it back to the main display is to click on it. As you've probably understood, this game is played with the mouse only, which speeds it up and makes access to your information easy.

I click on Sulu, who is the navigator. Three control panels are at his disposition. First, you have the general layout of the area, represented as a spinning 3-D universe which makes it very realistic. You may obtain a zoom view on the regional zone, and even the local area. You only need to click on a solar system to obtain its name and distance. If you then click on Spock, he will indicate if a system is Romulan, Klingon, or Federation. Click again on Sulu to indicate the cruising speed you want.

I chose to navigate at Warp 10, the maximum speed. After a few moments, the digitized voice of Scotty reminds me: "We must slow down or otherwise the ship will desintegrate!". I thus slow down to Warp 8. I arrive in the Zuner solar system, containing 6 planets. I click on a planet in the view of the system obtained by Sulu, and then on Spock to find out what we can expect here. A digitized voice informs me that a message has just been received. I click on Uhura, who tells me that there is a fleet of over 1000 ennemy ships in the galaxy. Since Zuner is controlled by the Federation, I am almost assured not to make any unfriendly encounters. On Zuner I, an energy station can be found which recharges my energy for navigating between the interior planets of the system. Zuner IV is a repair station which might come in handy if the vessel is attacked. Lastly, Spock informs me that Zuner IV supports life forms. On the Zuner system plan given by Sulu, I click on Zuner IV to get there at full impulse power.

After a few seconds, a beautiful picture of the Enterprise in orbit appears along with a message from Sulu. I click on Scotty who indicates the remaining amount of Warp energy for travelling between systems, and the level of impulse power for travel within systems. Time to click on Kirk, which advises me to teleport 6 or 7 members of the crew on the planet's surface. The choice is up to you. You'll rapidly discover that having only one person on a planet is near useless. Also

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WHY I DON'T HATE ATARI

by Ken White

In Britain, there's an ugly little activity known as Paki-bashing. Paki-bashing, simply put, is the practice of beating up immigrants on the streets (or whereever one finds them), usually immigrants of East Indian extraction. This Paki-bashing is generally carried out by gangs of young thugs, who have nothing better to do with their time than stomp defenseless people into the pavement.

In Atariland, we have a different, though similar activity. It's called Atari-bashing, and it's not done by gangs of young thugs. It's generally carried out by some members of Atari computer users groups.

DIVINE RIGHTS

The only real contact most of us have with members of other Atari users groups is through their newsletters and the messages they leave on BBS's and national online services like GEnie and Compuserve. Sometimes I'm more than a bit puzzled by the things I read.

I see long articles, in newsletters, and long messages, on GEnie and Compuserve, attacking Atari. Not the computers. The company. And the people who run the company.

What is the basis of this attack? Well, it is usually centered around one of three things:

1)Where are the new products? Atari promised us new products and hasn't delivered. Those jerks at Atari better get their act together or...

2)Where's the product support? How come Atari doesn't have a toll-free product support number like they used to? Those jerks at Atari better get their act together or...

3)Where's the user group support? Our group wants to (put out a newsletter)(put on an Atarifest)(raffle off some Atari computer equipment), and Atari isn't giving us any (advertising)(front money)(free equipment). Those jerks at Atari better get their act together or..

Or what? Or you'll go out and buy another brand of computer? Go ahead. Perhaps you'd like to experience the joys of waiting for Commodore vaporware. Or possibly you'll be calling up Apple's toll-free number when your overpriced machine fails to operate. Or maybe you can start your own IBM users group, and IBM will send ya ten or fifteen thousand bucks worth of equipment to get you started (in other words, a computer or two...)(low-end computers at that).

Oh, please. There's stupidity, and there's extreme stupidity. I'm occasionally guilty of stupidity myself. I seldom venture into the realms of extreme stupidity.

Wanna hear a scenario from the world of the truly stupid?

A phone rings. It's picked up in mid-ring by a man with a deep voice and the inflections of Eastern Europe in his accent. "Hello, this is Jack Tramiel. How may I help you?"

"Hi, Jack, Ken White here."

"Oh, hello, Ken," Jack replies quickly, a hint of concern in his voice. "How nice to talk to you. If you'll hold on just a moment, I'll call up your records.....hmmm, an 800, a 65XE, a 130XE, a 1050 drive, and a 1040 ST with both color and monochrome monitors. What can I do for you. I hope there's nothing...wrong with your computer system."

"It's the power pack, Jack. The power pack for the 65XE. It's gone bad. I can't use the 65XE."

Jack mutters an oath in his native tongue, then quickly says, "Well, that's serious enough. Hold on just another moment, please." Through the phone, the sounds of Jack Tramiel's bellowing can be heard. "Sam! Sam, get in here right now. We've got an emergency call in South Florida that needs to be taken care of immediately."

He comes back on the line and says, "I'm getting my son Sam in here right now. He'll be on a plane within the hour with a replacement power pack." In the background, the sound of another voice is heard. Jack says "Idaho? All right, Leonard, I guess this one is yours."

Then Jack returns to the phone and says, "I'm sorry, Ken, but Sam is currently on his way to Boise, Idaho. A 410 tape recorder is functioning at an off-speed, making it very difficult to load the cassette version of Jumpman. With any luck, Sam will have it running like a top by tomorrow morning."

"But Jack... Atari hasn't manufactured a 410 recorder in four or five years. That was well before you bought the company."

"Service is my motto, Ken. You know that. If it has the Atari name on it, I am duty-bound to take care of the owner of the machine." Jack pauses for a moment. "Anyway, my other son, Leonard, is on his way to the warehouse. He'll pick up a replacement power pack for your 65XE, then hop the first plane east. He should be landing at Palm Beach International Airport by midnight. He can take a taxi from there."

"Sounds good, Jack. Thanks for the support."

"No problem, Ken. Why do you think I put my home number on a card in every Atari product sold..."

Nice thought, huh.... Service is our profession.

Unfortunately, service is NOT the profession of the Atari Corporation. Computer manufacture is the profession of the Atari Corporation. There's a certain obligation to provide a specified amount of service built-in to that profession. A specified amount of service equivalent to the period of the warranty.

JIM'S CORNER

by Jim Woodward

SO YOU THINK ATARI HAS TROUBLES?????

You think that there is trouble in Sunnyvale? Think that if Jack and Sons don't get those new products out, there won't be any reason for me to keep writing this column? Well, guess again kids. It's time to get hard core and jump back into the real world.

First of all, the following information is taken from the July 27, 1987 issue of MacWEEK, a magazine that covers what computer? And when does it come out? Very good! We can go on now.

First off imagine that you are John Sculley, President of Apple Computer. You are sitting at your desk, looking at stock reports, profit margins, product release schedules, all those tough things that you do as President of Apple Computers. It has been a tough day, the usual complaints, projects that are way over-budget and past due date. You have Excedrin Headache #276. So, you hop into your fancy car, open the sunroof, and head for home and the hot tub and a nice cold drink.

Sounds like the average executive day so far, right? Wrong. You, as the Big Cheese, want to have some relaxing music after that hellish day. So, you turn on the car stereo, and switch to your favorite local station. Ahhhhh, that feels much better. Things ae finally going right today.....or so you think. Because around the bend, and past the next exit, is something worse than any nut firing at your car....yes, it is.......The Super Excedrin Headache. That Powerful locomotive that Superman is more powerful than is now running full speed inside your head. And that speeding bullet is now ricocheting in there too. And that tall building.....it just collapsed.

What happened? Well, the newscaster comes on and is giving yout the latest business news. And it isn't good news. You hear the news and turn off at the first exit, and head back towards the office. This looks like it is gonna be a long night.

NO WRIST SLAP HERE.......

By now, you are wondering what I am talking about, and so am I. Lets get to the point and remember, you are still John Sculley. The radio broadcast told you of how Toshiba was in hot water with the U.S. Government for selling the Russians computer equipment. Equipment that would, when used with the milling equipment sold to the Russians by a Norwegian company, would allow the Russians to make silent submarine propellers. And every school aged child must know that selling anything more powerful than the old Atari 2600 that is collecting dust in the closet to the Soviet Union is enough to get those men in dark suits from Washington D.C. knocking at your door.

What does Apple have to do with Toshiba? Plenty! It seems that Toshiba makes major portions of the Apple Image Writer II. And is geared up to make the major parts of the soon to be announced Image Writer LQ 24-pin printer. Apple stands to lose over $150 million a year, just on the Image Writer II market. What they would loose on the LQ model is unknown. But remember, you are the President of Apple, how does it feel to get kicked in the teeth?

The U.S. Congress is talking about banning Toshiba products from being sold in this country. Even if it means that jobs will lost. Even if it means that firms like Apple will lose money. It doesn't matter, we have to teach those guys at Toshiba a lesson.

Then, as if Apple doesn't have enough problems, Panasonic and Brother say that they will be more than happy to meet their needs. Just one problem. Apple says that it will take at least two years to get another company up to speed producing a printer to meet their specifications. Real Cute.

Oh well, them's the breaks, right? Wrong! This incident shows why a whole lot of companies, from those who make computers to cars, to what ever, are in a very sticky situation. Say you are making the amazing new "Byte-Buster" personal computer. You have a company that you buy your disk drives from, another that supplies your chips, another that makes your monitors, yet another that makes the cables to hook everything up, and yet another that makes the boxes that everything gets shipped in. If just one link in the supply chain gets cut off.....no production. Your customers are buying the competing "Techno-tron". The stores that carry your products drop them. And you have a ton of half built computers.

It is the same way with the car companies. The engine is made in West Germany, the transmission comes from South Korea and the digital dashboard comes from Japan. Then, all those parts are shipped to Mexico or Brazil and the car is made. Don't laugh at this because thats just how several cars now being sold by the Big 4 automakers are being built. Suppose that something bad happens to the governments of one of those countries and they aren't letting the parts out or the workers go on strike. Now what? You can't hand the customer a bunch of boxes and tell them to make it themselves.

And now, the rest of the story. The reason many of the new products that have been promised from Atari are not here is because of similar problems. This company has the needed chip backordered. That company had a fire and they can't make anything at all, and that means that another source has to be found, and then they have to be able to produce the part at a similar cost, meet your standards, and get them to you yesterday. Then, the printer hasn't finished the boxes, the documentation is in final revisions, the software is at the duplicators, etc.

MORAL OF THE STORY: All of us, myself included, are just going to have to be more patient. It isn't gonna kill us if the new whatever comes out in September or December. Besides, you aren't the one that has to get the letters and phone calls. Imagine what it must be on the other side.

That is all for this month. Be with us next month when Mr. World Enonomy will explain the Gross National Product.

CENTER SEAT (FROM PAGE 2)

come to the aid of the club. This takes some of the load off of the Officers, and means that things will get done, instead of having to wait till there is time. It also means an infusion of new ideas into the running of the club. If you are one of those who have volunteered, thanks again. If you aren't, please step forward and do your part..

PRETTY IMPRESSIVE!

Yes, the August issue of the newsletter was definitely a treat to look at. I still sneak a peek every now and then just to see that miracle. Ken White, Publishing Partner and the NEC P6 Pinwriter....what a team. Today the newsletter, tomorrow...... If you like the new look to the newsletter, please tell Ken. Not only will it make him happy, but he might not hit me if I screw up this months issue.

UNTIL NEXT TIME.......

(Why is this the hardest part of the column to write?) Be sure to stay tuned for all the exciting goings on. The next few months is going to be lots of hard work, but is going to be a lot of fun too. See ya all later.••

Yep, old son. That's it. 90 days. If the computer you purchase from the Atari Corporation bites the big one during that 90 day period, they'll fix it or replace it. On day 91, you're on your own.

Sounds hard and cruel, doesn't it? Not at all what you were expecting. When you spent your $99 for that 800XL, or that $140 for that 130XE, or that $1000 for the 1040 ST, you were expecting, perhaps, a lifetime committment to service from the company that put their name on that computer. You were, perhaps, expecting that company to provide you with all of your computer needs. You were, possibly, expecting that company to throw some money your way if you and a group of friends decided to form a club, the primary activites of which would revolve around the products of the aforementioned company.

Well, hell! And why not. I mean, that's one of the things the good Lord, in whatever incarnation you view him/her/it, has guaranteed Atari computer owners. The divine right of support, as they say. In Britain, it took a near-revolt to get the King to give up what was then known as the Divine Right of Kings, and sign a document called the Magna Carta. The modern counterpart to that Divine Right of Kings has apparently found its home in the minds of some Atari computer owners.

But we deserve that support. It's our due. We bought their computers. We show other people what wonderful computers Atari makes. A bunch of us get together every month and have a meeting and talk about Atari computers.

Anyway, don't it say somethin' in the Bill of Rights or the Ten Commandments or somethin' like that about computer companies that don't support their users?

ATARI-BASHING...

And when the average, demanding Atari user doesn't get what he/she/it thinks is his/her/its due, then look out. Things can get real ugly real fast.

The nasty messages start getting left on BBS's and online services. The nasty articles start being published in newsletters. When actual face-to-face contact with Atari representatives is possible, those representatives are verbally assaulted.

Let's look at a couple of case histories....

THE ST TRANSFORMER

For those who have spent the past four-five months living beneath a rock, the ST Transformer is the 8-bit emulator that a Canadian programmer has developed for the ST. Whazzat? It's a program you load into your ST that allows you to run your 8-bit software.

Great, you say. Now I can run good ol' Paperclip in 80 columns....

Well...not exactly...

See, if the program was designed to run in forty-columns, that's what you're gonna see on your ST monitor. It'll look the same as it did on yur 8-bit monitor or TV. True, you'll have the advantage of a large ramdisk, large amounts of storage on a single disk, and faster disk access. But it's still gonna be the same program.

An 8-bit emulator for the ST is a nice idea, and I guess if people want to run their 8-bit software on their ST, there's nothing wrong with it. (the main argument most people put forth has been the fact that you won't lose all the money you've invested in 8-bit software by having that software sit around, gathering dust....oooookay....if I might be so bold as to inquire....if you were so attached to the capabilities of the 8-bit Atari, why did you buy an ST? To run 8-bit software? Frankly, if a FULLY OPERATIONAL (and I'm talking 100% here...) 8-bit emulator was available, I would still be using my ST software. If I want to write

using PaperClip, I'll just boot it up on my 8-bit Atari and write to my heart's content...).

But, as I said, if somebody wants it, why not?

Well, the abovementioned Canadian programmer (I could dig out his name, but I'm too lazy and it's really not germane to the discussion anyway...) decided that it would be an interesting project. And he set out to write such an emulator.

Only one little problem cropped up - he was using Atari's ROM (Read Only Memory) code to emulate an Atari 8-bit. That code is copyrighted (as well it should be, since it's essentially the operating system of the Atari 8-bit computer...). And Atari didn't like the idea that this guy was, in effect, stealing their copyrighted code for his own product (and make no mistake about it, we're talking PRODUCT here....the foo-foo really started to hit the fan when talk about this emulator turned to marketing it - as in making money from a program that was, in part, copyrighted by Atari.). So they asked him to stop.

You would have thought Atari had demanded that he sacrifice his entire family on an alter made of Commodores at high noon on Canada Day. Lord have mercy...

The first one to really take up the torch, so to speak, was John Nagy, editor of the Michigan Atari Magazine. Let me say that I have a lot of respect for Mr. Nagy, both as a writer and as the sysop of the C.H.A.O.S. BBS. Let me then say that I think Mr. Nagy went completely overboard in his coverage of the ST Transformer story. Instead of reporting the story, Mr. Nagy became an advocate; instead of fairly covering both sides of the story, Mr. Nagy stirred up emotions with partisan articles.

The thrust of Mr. Nagy's articles, in the Michigan Atari Magazine, on Compuserve, in Zmag, and currently in The Computer Shopper as well, was that Atari had NO right to stop the ST Transformer from being released. It was, apparently, Atari's OBLIGATION to make sure that this product was released. And by blocking that release, Atari was betraying it's users.

Now I'll freely admit that it was pretty damn stupid for people like Neil Harris of Atari to wonder publically why anybody would want a product like the ST Transformer. As I said before, though I, personally, don't have any real need for an 8-bit emulator for my ST(I've got an 8-bit - what do I want an emulator for???), if somebody wants one, let 'em have it. Hell, there's already two software emulators out for the ST to emulate IBM/MSDOS machines, as well as a CP/M emulator and the Magic Sac Macintosh emulator. I don't have a lot of real use for any of them, but if people want 'em, that's cool.

However, the bottom line is that Atari DID NOT have to allow a programmer to use its copyrighted Operating System because users of their computers wanted them to. Use of copyrighted programming code without the permission of the holder of that copyright is theft, no matter how well intentioned. When a petition showed up at one of our club meetings, demanding the release of the 8-bit emulator for the ST, to be signed and sent on to Atari, I refused to have anything to do with it. I also spoke out, at the meeting, presenting the "other" side of the story.

I'm not taking Atari's side in this thing, anymore than I'd be taking Michtron's side if somebody decided to take a bunch of the code from Major Motion and develop another game using that code. And as things turned out, Atari did finally give permission for the ST Transformer to be released, provided that the program remains in the public domain. The Canadian programmer will retain rights to the code he wrote.

What bothers me, here, is the attitude that Atari owed

BYTING (FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

its customers this emulator. People were leaving messages DEMANDING that Atari get it's programmers and technical people into action, to help produce the emulator.

ATARIFESTS WITHOUT ATARI

The latest wrinkle in Atari-bashing would seem to be a growing wave of reaction to Atari's apparent decision to cancel its own corporate participation in Atarifests in 1988. What this means is simple enough - no front money from Atari, no advertising money from Atari, no Atari exibit, no Atari personnel.

Why is Atari pulling out of the "fest" business? Word is that Atari is growing somewhat disillusioned with the treatment they've received at the hands of some users groups. Specifically over the ST Transformer issue. (See, all this stuff ties together sooner or later...).

At recent Atarifests, before Atari made the decision to okay the Transformer, Atari personnal were harassed, browbeaten, and generally treated poorly by members of some users groups. I imagine their reaction was the same as yours or mine would be in a similar situation - "I'm spending money to be here for THIS kind of treatment???"

So, word is going around that Atari will no longer be sponsoring Atarifests. Meaning the users groups can, of course, put them on if they wish. But Atari won't be paving the road, so to speak, for them to travel.

There's a group in the Northeast that's already starting to scream about this - "Let's put Atari back in Atarifest", goes the saying (catchy, eh?), and they're running a form letter for you to fill out and send on to Neil Harris. I imagine in coming months, this will be the new flag flown by the Ataribashers, as the ST Transformer arrives and is ound to be....interesting, but not particularly useful to the verage user. The Ataribashers will need something to hit Atari over the head with, and their lack of participation in coming Atarifests will probably do quite nicely.

Again, we come up against Atari's OBLIGATIONS to its customers, and again I repeat what I said near the beginning of this editorial - Atari has no obligations to its customers other than support of their product through the specified warranty period. Obviously, if they wish to be a successful company, they should produce the best computers that they can, and they should introduce new products and they should offer some user support beyond the warranty. But those are keys to business success, not OBLIGATIONS.

Why do users groups put on Atarifests in the first place? Why is the Atari Computer Club of the Palm Beaches currently involved in setting up an Atarifest to be held in November of this year with the assistance of Atari?

Money. Plain and simple. A successful Atarifest means good money to the user group (or groups) putting it on. It means the cash that the show itself brings in. It means the membership dues that new members, attracted by the show, will pay. It means more advertising for the group's newsletter, as software and hardware vendors become familiar with the people behind the user group's name and choose to support them.

True, putting on a big computer show is also fun, and interesting, and ego-building, and all that other good stuff. But please, don't tell me that any group wants to put on an Atarifest for the greater glory of Atari, and nothing more. If a group wants to help Atari, let 'em collect a hundred bucks from each member and take out a full page ad in a national newspaper or magazine. There's a selfless move for ya.

No, it's mostly money (as are most things), and members of a growing number of Atari users groups feel that Atari should fork over front money for facilities, and advertising, and other expenses, and then spend more money to attend that show. Why? OBLIGATION. Atari is

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OBLIGED to support their users, and help those users make money for their users groups.

Uh-huh..........

WHY I DON'T HATE ATARI...

I don't hate Atari, because they've given me a relatively trouble-free line of computers, in both the 8-bit and ST lines. I went to the store and bought an Atari 800. Later I purchased both a 65XE and a 130XE. And a 1040 ST color system.

They've also provided peripherals that have been relatively trouble-free. Three 1027 printers. A monochrome monitor for my ST. A 1050 disk drive.

Atari has fulfilled their obligation to me. The obligation to provide computer equipment that worked. The obligation to support that equipment if something went wrong during the warranty period.

Has Atari announced and not-yet released products that I might have an interest in sometime in the future. Sure. I'd like to get my hands on the new 300/1200 baud direct connect modem, to use as a back-up to my Avatex, and to allow me to transfer text files from the 8-bit to the ST four times faster. When the IBM emulator box is released, I might give it some consideration. The same with the 32-bit box.

As for the Mega ST line, I may ultimately buy one, and turn the 1040 into something predictable like a bulletin board system. On the other hand, I may just expand the memory of the 1040 up to 4 megabytes and say the hell with the Megas.

But whether or not I buy ANY of the above-mentioned products, Atari has given me what I paid for. A couple of computers, and the peripherals to make those computers more useful. So what have I got to complain about?

Would I run the Atari Corporation the same way it's being run if I was sitting in Jack Tramiel's office (instead of Jack, of course)? No, I'd make some changes. Anybody can pick at things they feel are being done wrong. With Atari or with any other company, computer-oriented or otherwise. If I was suddenly crowned president of Bordon, I'd probably get rid of that damn cow.

But to confuse changes one feels should be made in the way a company does business, with obligations that company has to its customers is...well, confused. When was the last time you called Lee Ioccoca at Chrysler and said, "Hey, Lee, I understand that you're bringing out new big engines on the New Yorker model. I've got one of the older models, the one with the smaller engines. Could I get an engine upgrade? Maybe bring it by my dealer and have him drop the new big engine into the engine compartment." And when Lee patiently explains to you that you're gonna have to pay big, big bucks to get that new big engine, do you scream, "Hey, wait a second! I bought my New Yorker, paid good money for it, and now I demand that you fulfill your obligation to me and offer an engine upgrade." No, I think not....

People, apparently, need something to complain about, something to bash. Personally, I'd prefer to bash something that has brought me grief, not pleasure. I'll save my bashing for things other than Atari....

Thanks to all the contributors last month, who made the first Publishing Partner issue a real success. Javier Korneluk, Jim Woodward, Al Tressel, Victor Abreu, and so on and so forth. Special thanks to Deron Kazmaier and Shawn Fogle of SoftLogik Corp. for developing and publishing the fabulous Publishing Partner program. And thanks to Jim Woodward, for taking some of the load for this issue off my shoulders. Assuming, of course, he did.••

GENIE ONLINE (FROM PAGE 10)

if you want to really classify things as pointing, then EVERY WAY we can imagine to run the computer is only 'pointing' to the .com and .exe files (to use an IBM example) in the directory. This is why I used the UNIX filter example, as it does allow some 'command inventing' and creativity on the part of the user. What I was trying to say is that man's intelligence is centered on his use of language, and pictures are a very limiting and primitive sort of language. Therefore, an icon-based computer interface is inherently limiting. We do not find Cave Texts in Cro Magnon caves: we find Cave Drawings. Shakespeare and Godel did not draw pictures to communicate their ideas, they wrote them down. And that is why I can't agree that it is a coincidence that we find computing and reading bound together in the same system. Man's intelligence is bound to his use of and manipulation of language, and computers help to extend his ability to do that. This is the reason for word processors on computers, and why pictures aren't likely to free us to explore new and "creative thought structures." What is the picture for "Your mind is tossing on the ocean."?

DHESI [Rahul]   at 23:32 EST

I think mice (which I prefer to call rats) are definitely *not* the wave of the future. The real wave of the future will be a video screen that will look like the draftsman's light box, a gently sloping surface you can rest you work and your hands on, which will display the output, and you will point directly to the screen instead of going through the complex cybernetic process of moving a rat on the table, which moves a pointer on the screen, which guides you to correct the motions of the rat. Too complex, too indirect, too tedious, too unnatural. I would rather point directly to the screen. Unfortunately light-pen technology hasn't yet reached the precision of the rat. But it will some day.

Until then I much prefer to let my nimble fingers do the walking (typing) on my keyboard.

TOMNEFF   at 12:13 EST

Somehow I thought Rahul and I used to fight like cats and dogs on this one -- maybe it was Charlie, my memory's going -- but I agree completely with the "light box" model, and I have often postulated the same thing. For the desk, a 24x36 or larger work surface with arbitrary windows, etc, what have you. My other idea was a soft rubber keyboard which you lay down anywhere on the screen you want, which synchs itself automatically and lets you type wherever's convenient. (Typing will NOT go away until we have thought level interfaces -- which I predict we will have -- but not even then, completely.) The other thing I'd like would be a roll-up terminal with about an 18-inch screen made out a kind of vinyl, like those chessboards we used to use at tournaments; real practical, and washable. The rubbery keyboard could be molded into the base of this one.

You could drag it around with you anywhere -- to the beach, on the train, to school or meetings -- and just unroll it and work whenever you felt like it. The pointing device would be your finger, and the connection to the outside world would be a fiber optic wire about the size and thickness of a shoelace. God only knows how much you could store in the terminal (computer) itself; a lot. TMN

STRIPLING   at 18:21 EDT

Boy! Are you guys making mountains out of mousehills. And what great gobs of theoretical horse (mouse?) manure! Whether or not you like a mouse depends on whether you're used to it and what you use it for. Mice are not best used to point to the menu and select cordon bleu; they are best used to manipulate text, move and resize windows, and draw. They are not data input devices. For typing in text, give me keyboard control every time. But for editing that text, I want a mouse to define the area to be changed, moved or deleted, and to tell the program where I want the insert point to be. Mice are wonderful in spread sheets. NOvices would love mice because it makes learning the program much easier; if you can then move on to keyboard commands, fine. But I have friends who gave up because they have to bill their time and can't afford to learn the commands.••

you, the better off you'll be. If a desktop publishing program limits you to one, and only one, graphics format, you're stuck creating graphics with a program you may not necessarily like.

Now that you have your picture of your whatever, let's place it on the screen, which should represent your printed page (as mentioned last month, the closer the image on your screen matches the final output, the better off you'll be...). Place it anywhere. Lay it down in the center, if you like. Any desktop publishing program worth it's weight in floppies should allow you to move things around after you've placed them on the screen. And you're probably going to want to do a lot of moving around as the job continues.

Next it's time to place the copy, the text of your advertisement. I'll assume, for the sake of simplicity, that you're (well, okay, WE'RE...all right, already....I'M) designing a full page advertisement. Remember, the ad must both stand out (to catch the reader's eye) and be pleasing to the eye (otherwise the reader will take his/her/its eye back...).

The content of the text will certainly have something to do with how well the ad does its job. Huge letters proclaiming "FREE TRIP AROUND THE WORLD WITH PURCHASE OF LARGE FRIES AND A SOFT DRINK" will probably have the desired effect of moving a helluva lot of fries and sodas. But a certain part of the success of such an ad will ride on the fact that the letters WERE huge ones. If you had buried this ludicrous claim in small letters somewhere in the body of the text, some people would undoubtedly see it (those who felt deserving of a break today, perhaps...), and the word of mouth would undeniably be fantastic. But placing the claim out in the open, in large, hard-to-miss letters, is a far better guarantee that the message will attract attention.

So, now that you know what you're going to say about your product in words, it's time to decide HOW your words are going to be presented. As mentioned above, large text, without a doubt, attracts more attention than small text. So let's make ALL the text large!

Boing! Boing! Boing! Tilt...tilt...tilt.... No, we DON'T want to make all of the text large. Making all of the text large is as bad as making all of the text small. It diminishes the effect. It makes the reader think that each word is as important as the other. And it looks awful, too...

Obviously your desktop publishing software should allow you to place text of varying sizes on the screen (and hence on the paper, when the document is finally printed...). Publishing Partner allows text ranging in size from 3 points to 72 points (a point is 1/72nd of an inch...so that's text ranging in size from 3/72nds of an inch (pretty small) to 1 inch in height and through use of a couple of other commands, that size can be increased to 2 inches in height). You should also be able to place that text anywhere on the screen you wish, and move it if you so choose. If you don't have that basic flexibility, then it's time to start looking for another desktop publishing program.

Here you are. You've got your graphic sitting there in the middle of the page, staring back at you. You've got the words you want to put in the ad sitting on the tip of your tongue (actually, probably resting quietly in the frontal lobes of your brain...). What now, you ask plaintively?

Now it's time to get to work. Lay in a line of text. Lay in the most IMPORTANT line of text (why start at the back and work your way to the front - this is America!). Make it big! Make it bold! Use a clear, readable font!

(Hold it...."font", eh?....just what, might I ask, is a font? Sorry, forget to mention that a font is a style of type, a typeface. You've seen words written in a style of type that had lots of curls and little weird thingamabobs coming off of the letters what you were probably looking at was an Old English (sometimes known as Olde English by trendys) or Gothic FONT. Keep the idea of fonts in mind, since the font chosen for the various pieces of text in a printed document can be as important as the thought behind the words...)

Now where was I....ah, yes, a clear, readable font. I just mentioned an Old English font, by way of example. DO NOT, under any circumstances, overuse a decorative font like Old English. Decorative fonts are for emphasis, and for effect. They should not be used as a matter of course. To go back to the military metaphor, you may have a tactical nuclear weapon in your backpack, but you don't use it to take out an enemy machinegun nest. Decorative fonts are like tactical nuclear weapons they can make a real big bang if used at the proper time and in the proper place, but they're almost always a little hard on the eyes.

Stick with the clear, readable fonts. The fonts that make the words jump off of the page, into the reader's mind. Use a bold font, if you wish (if you're using a decent desktop publishing program, you can probably make any of the fonts available to you "bold" or enhanced). But make it easy for the reader to read...if the reader looks at the words of your ad (or any other document) and doesn't immediately recognize what it says, he/she will probably move right on along.

So, you've placed the most important text on the page. It's in big, readable letters. As mentioned before, don't worry about WHERE the text is placed; your program should allow you to move it around later, if you wish. Next, you want to start laying in the rest of the text. You can lay in that text in any way you choose - some of it might be single lines, the advertising equivalent of a headline. Other portions of the text might be in blocks, the advertising equivalent of a column. Do it freeform. Get the words out of your head and onto the screen, which represents the page.

Okay, now you're done. Everything you want to say about your product (or business, or whatever it is you're advertising) is on the page in front of you. Now it's time to officially lay it out.

PUBLISHING (FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

Here's where the ability to move text (whether in columns or single lines, or even single words) comes into play, and proves its value. Start moving things around. If you're using a program that allows you to use a device like a mouse, all the better - you can grab an "object" and move it around like a hockey puck on the ice (okay, so it's a pretty lame analogy, but it's better than a military metaphor...). Experiment. Move things around. If you can, set your screen display to show the full page. It doesn't matter whether you can read the text, which with a full-page display might be much too small to make out clearly. You're not looking at what it says. You're looking at HOW IT APPEARS. The trick is to make it attractive.

Make it appeal to the eye of the reader. Place the graphic where it will catch the reader's attention. That can be in the center (depending on the size, of course there's nothing more asinine than a tiny little picture in the middle of the page...), or perhaps at the top, with the text (or copy, to use a more exact term) laid out beneath it.

Do one layout. Save that layout on disk, or even print it out. Then play around with it some more. Save that one. Print it out. Then do another.

As I said, the idea is to experiment with the tools your desktop publishing program has given you. Put a box around some of the copy. Looks awful? Get rid of it and try something else. Remember, if you're trying to sell something, you want to make the best impression possible. The time you spend in designing the ad and experimenting with the layout will definitely pay off in the end through additional sales.

Of course, what I've said about designing a full page ad can also be easily adapted to a flyer or brochure. If you use the ability to mix text and graphics that desktop publishing gives you, you can easily create eyecatching documents that will make an impact. Some of these ones are also applicable to the document type that will be discussed in the final installment of this series next month - newsletters, newspapers, and other predominantly text-oriented documents. But for now, remember:

LESSON 2: MAKE IT EASY ON THE EYES
LESSON 3: TAKE YOUR TIME AND EXPERIMENT WITH LAYOUT.

SYSOP (FROM PAGE 3)

"Dragon's Nest". A catchy name for the board also helps to keep it in callers minds. There is another personality that won't be mentioned after this, piracy. Some of these boards are some of the better "theme" boards, if you like sailing the bounding main.

Once you set up your board, you have to decide how many message bases you are going to have, how much room is to be used for uploads, etc. This is all dependent on how much room you have to work with. If you have 2 plain 1050 drives, you aren't going to have 7 message bases and still have lots of room for uploads. If you have 3 doubled 1050's and a 256K ramdisk, then you will be able to have several large message bases and lots of room for files. It all depends on your system.

Now, if you still want to be a SysOp and run your board, congratulations. You are about to start on a side of computing that can be a whole lot of fun. And like most hobbies, requires a little work to make it enjoyable. I wish you a lot of luck. And drop me a line when you get going and tell me about your board.••

STAR TREK (FROM PAGE 11)

select among the equipment found on other planets the one which you will need and then teleport your personel. The digitized sound of the teleportation is amazing.

Then is the planet surface exploration phase, a primordial aspect of the game, but not with such elaborate graphics as the other parts. The faces of the six crew members are represented along with the object or the person in front of you in wireframe form. According to the nature of the object blocking your way (door, robot, security bomb, etc...) each person suggests a different solution. The doctor often wants to get closer, while Spock will rather use logic, Kirk will often look for hidden mechanisms and Sulu proposes to destroy everything. You're the one choosing an appropriate course of actions. If this works, no problem; you move ahead and get to the following obstacle. If it doesn't work, nothing might happen, or your crew members might be wounded. Teleport yourself back on the Enterprise and click on the doctor who will heal the crew, as indicated with a life bar under the person's figure.

Back on the planet, continue until you find an interesting object. Spock often knows what to use it for and you can take it for someone's use or teleport it aboard. Some objects can be used against doors, robots or bombs while others can be installed aboard the ship to increase its resistance, its weapons, etc... It's equally possible to meet on these planets superior races, often friendly, but sometimes dangerous. In this case, it's the way to communicate that you have to select. The doctor offers to simply dialogue, while Spock prefers ESP, and Kirk is often menacing. Most often, the alien will reveal the location of a useful object.

A new message from the Federation makes me more aware of my ultimate goal, because roaming aimlessly around the universe is not too productive. It's right then that the red alert sounds. I click on the main deck and turn off the alarm. I then click on Checkov who takes care of battles. On his screens appear three Klingon vessels. I select the phasers, and click on one of the points on the radar. This puts me in battle mode. The enemy ship in wireframe representation heads towards me. You manoeuver a red circle which diminishes in size as the other ship comes closer.

You must click on the enemy ship in such a way as to center the firing circle. When you click on the fire button, a shot lands arbitrarily somewhere indside this circle. You will then understand that the circle needs to be as small as possible if you really wish to hit your opponent. After two or three shots, the vessel disappears into space. But after the first few battles, my phasers are completely empty. I then select the torpedoes and head back into combat. During all battles, Spock indicates your vessel's energy level and that of the enemies. I've suffered serious damage and repairs are compulsary. Before anything else, I select Kirk and save my game position, fearing another encounter with the Klingons. I first go to a Dilithium mining complex planet and fuel up on energy for intergalactic travel, on another planet housing an energy complex for travel between planets, on a weapons dump planet where I find torpedoes, phaser replenishment and at lastly, to a repair center. All the damage has been repaired and I'm now able to resume my search.

Star Trek is certainly the most polished game to be found on the ST. The graphics come straight from digitized scenes reworked from the series, the sounds are wisely balanced between digitized and non-digitized, and finally, the interface is very efficient thanks to the use of the mouse and the seven mini-screens. The richness of the game (Star Trek contains over 1000 planets out of which about 450 to explore) makes the potential life span of this program almost unlimited.

To conclude, it seems that this is simply the best game available for now, and for a more than reasonable price. And that non-Atari Trekkies are not awaiting a version for their machines, since the programmers from Beyond Software have said that if they were ever to make versions for other computers, it would likely be much less attractive. So to all of you Trekkies, if you want to play heroes, you only have one thing left to do.••

THE LAUGHING I/O PORT

A COMPUTER PRIMER:
LESSON 2 - DON'T PANIC

by Mark Cantrell

As you'll recall, the first installment of our primer covered buying your first computer and raising money for psychiatric therapy. At this point, you are no doubt asking yourself, while struggling out of your straightjacket, when is your computer going to do something useful for you. If not, do it now. OK, the answer is: Not until you get to know each other a little better.

Consider your computer a very expensive date. You meet her in the store and decide, after agonizing for a few minutes, to invite her back to your place. She checks out your credit limit and agrees immediately. On the way home, you wonder if you made the right decision. What if she turns out to be...a Commodore? But no, you sweep these thoughts from your mind, wanting only to feel her keys beneath your groping fingers.

Home at last, you tear off her wrappings. She's beautiful, but silent. What to do next? You set her up and run your fingertips lightly over her keys. She doesn't pull away. You know what that means. She wants you to turn her on. Emboldened, you reach behind her and...

NO, NOT THAT SWITCH! GEEZ! Sorry, but it was close. It's obvious you're going to need a little more instruction. Let's go over a few computer terms like "instruction fee" and why it is actually very low as compared to, say, the price of the coffee maker found in your average C-130 cargo transport.

A FEW COMPUTER TERMS YOU SHOULD
KNOW BEFORE YOU TOUCH ANYTHING,
OR
GOD FORBID, ASK A REALLY STUPID QUESTION
IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE CLUB AND HAVE
YOUR MEMBERSHIP REVOKED ON THE SPOT.

BASIC - This is the language your computer "speaks". It "speaks" this language, not in actual sounds, but in "code" which should be as easily understood to you as Swahili to a Hooded Merganser. See "Bug".
BAUD - An anatomical expression used by telecommunication devices, as in "Hey, Mo - check out the baud on HER!" See "Modem".
BUG - What your eyes will do the first time you see the bill for the repair of your computer.
CURSOR - Programmer. See "Format".
DISK DRIVE - The urge to own more disks than anyone else in the club. See "Woodward".
DOS - Distort or Scramble. A decision your disk drive must make each time your access it.
ERROR - Mistake. See previous article, "Buying Your First Computer".
FORMAT - A convenient way to accidently erase your only copy of that unified field theory model you've been working on since the Nixon administration.
HACKER - A programmer driven over the edge. See

"Lizzie Borden".
K - A special term for cereal.
LINE - "Hey babe - how about a little I/O?"
MODEM - A euphemism for "busy signal".
MONITOR - Your computer sits in the hall and writes down the names of any other computers it catches skipping class.
NOTE AND POINT - See previous entry.
OPERATING SYSTEM - When your computer and all its components are in perfect working order. See "Dream on".
PARALLEL PORT - The hardest part of the Supertanker Skipper's exam.
PROGRAM - In favor of grams.
RAMDISK - What you'd like to do to the programmer who put those cutesy comebacks in your text adventure.
SAVE - A BASIC command which is supposed to save your program to disk. Instead, your computer converts it into "tokens" which it uses to hop a subway out of town before you're any the wiser.
SIXTEEN-BIT COMPUTER - $1.75 more than a two-bit computer.
UTILITY - A company which, upon learning of your purchase of several new electronic components, parties far into the night.
XL - A letter which used to be an "L".

OK, now for a pop quiz:
(1) Which famous American document contains the phrase, "His lips brushed hers, igniting the flames of passion which would surely make ashes of them both."?
(2) If a strip search is illegal, can you be arrested when looking for your favorite Sunday comic?
(3) How can you tell if your printer is in good health?

Answers: (1) Hart and soul (2) Yes (3) If it's at the top of its form.

Excellent! Remember, don't touch that computer until next time, when we'll discuss programming, and why you should never attempt it while sharing a wildebeest. Shearing. Whatever.••

THE
LAUGHING
I/O
PORT

THE DOGMAN
CAPER, PART II

by Albert X

HERE'S THE DEAL SO FAR....I got a call from a woman called Mary Marree, whose father had his throat torn out. It wasn't a pretty sight, I understand, but his daughter didn't look too bad. He'd died with the word "Dogman" on his lips, and the daughter wanted me to find out what it meant, and track down her father's killer. The only lead she could give me was that "Dogman" was the name of a real popular computer game. After checking out a local arcade, I learned that "Dogman" was a game made to be played on a computer, and was directed to a place called Ye Olde Software Shoppe...

I pushed through the revolving door of Ye Olde Software Shoppe and froze, my hand fumbling for the .45 under my left arm. The place was full of young hoodlums. Snot-nosed little punks and punkettes, chewing gum, sneering at each other, their fingers jerking convulsively around joysticks. Some who didn't have joysticks in their hands still twitched. It was an ugly sight.

I edged over to the glass counter and leaned against it, my hand still inside my jacket. I wasn't taking any chances. Through the glass of the counter, the lurid covers of the computer software packages gleamed up at me. "Mission on The Planet of the Frogs". "Stinky Toes". "Vulvaratanonium: The Game". They were all there, the trash that was destroying the minds of youth. The only one missing was the one that I sought - "Dogman".

Suddenly I recoiled and my fingers closed around the butt of my pistol. A deformed face had appeared in the glass. A face out of a nightmare. I looked up.

"What can I getcha, dude?" the clerk asked, showing a mouthful of large, greenish teeth. The kid probably didn't floss every couple of hours, like I do.

I cleared my throat and snapped, "Dogman. And make it fast, kid. My...uh...trigger finger is getting kind of itchy."

"Dogman," the little swine repeated. "Sure thing, dude. Will that be for the 8-bit or the ST?"

Before the kid could finish his question, I grabbed a handful of cheek and pulled him forward. His breath smelled of Diet Cherry Coke. Whatever happened to the honest smell of glue that was on the breath of American kids when I was a boy? Just another indication of the International Communist Conspiracy.

"Listen, fruit-breath," I growled, "I don't have all day. I don't know what an 8-bit is, and I don't want to know. Just give me 'Dogman' and I won't stretch your face out of shape." I paused a moment, then figured I might get through a little better if he thought I spoke his lingo. "Can you dig it, baby?"

"Sure, dude, sure," the kid mumbled. "I'll give ya both of them. Then, when ya decide which one you need, you'll have it handy."

"Smart move, chump," I spat. "You're learning how to deal with a real man. You've been spending too much time servicing the needs of juvenile delinquents. Give it enough time and maybe you'll be able to graduate up to flipper greaser at a pinball hall. That sound good to you, kid?"

"Yeah," the slimy little worm said with a grin distorted by my thumb and forefinger that still twisted the skin of his cheek. "Flipper greaser. That sounds rad, dude. Maybe I could practice with 'Pinball Construction Set'."

"'Pinball Construction Set'," I repeated. "What the hell is that?"

"A computer game, dude," the pus-bag said quickly. "Ya can make your own computer pinball..."

Before he could finish his disgusting description, I twisted hard and pulled. I wasn't able to get any real solid flesh, but I ripped off a nice chunk of skin. As he raised his hand to his bleeding face and began to yelp, I bared my teeth and said, "'Dogman'. Right now."

"Comin' up," the little airhead said quickly. He slapped a couple of brightly-painted boxes on the counter and said, "That'll be 50 bucks, please."

I pulled out a wad of bills and peeled off a fifty. It was good for young people to see how prosperous the straight and narrow path had made me.

As I picked up the boxes, I said, "So what am I supposed to do with these?"

"You put them in your disk drive," the bleeding nitwit said nervously. "You know..."

"I don't HAVE a disk drive!" I howled. "I don't HAVE a computer."

The kid was watching me through narrow eyes. "I guess you're gonna have to get yourself a computer then, dude."

I sighed deeply,. "Where?" I barked sharply.

"Ye Olde Computer Shoppe," the punk said with a jerk of his chin. "Just down the street."

"Great," I muttered. "I'm gonna be spending all the expense money on this trash. How is a guy supposed to make a decent living if he can't skim a little off the top?"

"What say, dude?" the kid asked with a puzzled frown, the blood trickling down his face.

"Never mind," I said, giving him a playful slap that rocked his head. As he stumbled backward, I added, "You keep that flipper greaser job in mind."

I backed out of Ye Olde Software Shoppe, the two copies of 'Dogman' in one hand, my other hand still on my piece. I'd seen mass hysteria before, and it wasn't a pretty sight. One of those kids might lose, and the whole sweating pack of them would turn into a mob.

Stepping out on the street, I took a deep breath of the fresh bus exhaust, then turned toward the direction Coke breath had indicated. I noticed a long, black limo pulling up beside me on the street.

I hesitated for a moment, my hand on the butt of my .45. I've made enemies in my years on the streets. Then the driver opened the window. "A word please," he said.

I moved closer to the open window, my hand still gripping my pistol. In the dimness of the back seat of the limo, I could make out a short, somewhat dumpy figure.

"What's up, pal?" I asked.

The dumpy figure in the back said, "Sam, tell him to forget about this 'Dogman' business. It's not good for his health." I recognized the accents of Eastern Europe in the dumpy figure's voice.

The chauffer said, "My father says..."

"I heard," I said. "You tell your father that NOBODY tells me to lay off a case."

"You'll be sorry," the man in the back said. "Business is war as far as I'm concerned."

"And war is my business, fat man," I barked. "Now shove off."

"Let's go, Sam," the dumpy man in the back seat sighed. "Neil and Sandy will show him the REAL meaning of Customer Service."

As the car rolled off, I thought about what the fat man had said. Neil and Sandy, eh? Probably a pair of fancy boys. I wasn't worried. I'd flossed.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

CLUB MEETINGS FOR 1987 AND NEWSLETTER FORMAT

MEETING DATES

|	
SEPTEMBER 8	OCTOBER 13
NOVEMBER 10	DECEMBER 8

NEWSLETTER FORMAT

Please help make this newsletter grow by contributing articles, reviews, tips & hints, or artwork. All local submissions receive priority placement in this newsletter.

The following is the format to be used for ALL submissions to the Pokey Press. Please, if possible, use ATARIWRITER, ATARIWRITER +, PAPERCLIP, STWRITER, FIRST WORD, WORD WRITER ST, OR IBM WORD PERFECT files. We also prefer disk submissions (5 1/4" or 3 1/2") or uploads to the Atari Computer Club of the Palm Beaches BBS (305-641-5372) rather than printed submissions, since printed submissions generally require that we retype them before printing.

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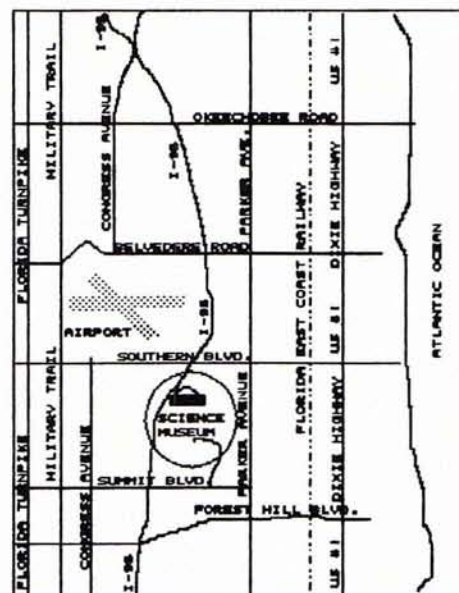
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